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My dear brother in the Lord

I duly received your favor dated Aug 1 - 1840 - and thank you for the kind expressions of affectionate interest in the efforts making in Russia for the extension of the Redeemers kingdom which it contained — and also for the mass of information communicated concerning the state of things in the United States - a country in which ever since my visit to it several years since I have felt deeply interested

Since I last addressed the Society I have been under the necessity of exchanging a foreign for a home Missionary station - but feel very unwilling to interrupt our correspondence - Having in the course of the last year made the acquaintance of a pious Christian Jew - who is pastor of one of the Lutheran churches in Russia - and obtained much information from him concerning his kinsmen according to the flesh I shall make that the subject of my present communication

My friend (Pastor Boerling) had labored for many years as a Christian Missionary to his nation - is connected with a Society at Berlin He states that there are few Jewish families in Prussia of which one or more of the connections have been baptised - and though many of them are Christians only in profession he knows many to be in heart the followers of Christ

A very general expectation was entertained by the Jews that the Messiah would appear in the course of the last year (1840). This expectation was founded on calculations made by many talmudists from data furnished by the prophecies of the O.T. &c. And one learned talmudist had openly declared that if the Messiah did not appear before the close of the year - he would be shut up to the conclusion that he had already come - and that Jesus of Nazareth must be he - Should the failure of this expectation lead the nation to prayer - there may be seen in our days a fulfilment of the ancient prediction "I will pour upon the house of David - and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced - and they shall mourn for it as one mourneth for his ~~first born~~ only son - and be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first born - And then shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem — and the land shall mourn every family apart — all the families that remain - every family apart - and then writes a pro "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?

Mr B— was stationed for many years in a Polish town inhabited by Jews When he went to reside there - he could see no opening for usefulness and began to fear that he had run unsent, but at that time the Cholera broke out in the town, and all the medical men of the place fled. Then he concluded that he had been sent hither of God - for a previous residence in several towns in Asia where the Cholera had prevailed. had made him acquainted with the most generally approved methods of treating those who suffered under that dreadful malady, and the people knowing this implored his aid. This aid he cheerfully afforded - and one consequence was that not only their houses - but their hearts were opened to him. He was invited to all their entertainments and feasts - and on one occasion being present at a marriage feast - when agreeably to custom all the guests presented marriage gifts to the newly married pair - And having shortly before received from London a supply of Hebrew Bibles including the N.T. - in 12mo - he presented a copy of these - which was gratefully received; and when at the close of the feast the bridegroom exhibited his presents announcing the names of the individuals from whom they had been severally received - holding up the Bible last he said "See what our friend the Missionary has given us! The Scriptures! This I value more highly than either silver or gold" - It was the practice of these people to take a copy of the Pentateuch to the Synagogue with them that they might accompany the reader in the daily lesson. This bible being of a portable size the bridegroom took it with him - which being observed by the reader - he asked him how he dared to bring the Christian book into the Synagogue. He replied that he had read it through and had found nothing unholy in it - and that he must - and would read it. Many of the other Jews now applied for copies with which they were supplied - and the desire for instruction became so great that the inhabitants of the town requested the Missionary to organise a school amongst them for the instruction of the young. Which he did organising one for the instruction of boys under his own superintendance and another for girls under the superintendance of his wife. In doing so he met with opposition and that from quarters where he had least reason to expect it. But by the great body of the Jews he was encouraged — After some time a learned talmudist came to him and said "One or other of us must leave the village. If you don't go I must go - for if things go on thus, my children too will be taught to read - and to read the books of the Christians"

He was afterwards appointed to Upper Silesia and removed thither. On approaching one town, if I recollect aright, the first he entered he was informed that all the inhabitants were Jews but that they were rich and had plenty of every thing and that he would find no opportunity of prosecuting his labors there. When he entered the town he was soon convinced that the state of the inhabitants was such as had been represented to him, but as a few Christian Jews resided there also he resolved to spend a few days in intercourse with them. He arrived on Friday and on the following day he went to the synagogue - where several of the Jews assembled there for worship observing him to be a stranger welcomed him with the usual salutation "Peace be with thee!" But when they observed that while prayer was offered, instead of looking about as did others, he stood devoutly and still they said "He is not a Jew - but a Missionary for all the Missionaries pray so". In the course of the day, however, many Jews visited him at his lodgings for conversation concerning Christianity - and they spent the time not in disputation as had been done at other places - but in calm & dispassionate comparison of the O T Prophecies with the history of Jesus of Nazareth as recorded in the Gospels - And in the evening six Jews whose heads were silvered with age waited upon him and almost adjured him to tell them what had convinced him that Jesus was the Messiah — and they too spent their visit in a calm and apparently prayerful examination of the attestations of the Messiah

It appears the prevalent opinion that the Jews present a hopeless field for Missionary culture - but from the observations of my friend there appear to be many things calculated to lead to the contrary conclusion the field is not hopeless - God hath not cast away his people - God is no respecter of persons but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted ~~of~~ with him - And our search amongst the Jews we may find many who have not bowed the knee to Baal - Many like to the godly Jews of former days - Men like Simeon "just & devout waiting for the consolation of Israel" I felt much interested in the description given by Mr Bowring of one of his acquaintances an aged Rabbi: who like Anna "departed not from the temple but served God with fastings night and day" - Regularly at the midnight hour is this aged patriarch to be found in the synagogue making confession and supplication unto God - He was accidentally overheard one night by Mr B - who repeated to me the prayer which a retentive memory enabled him to recall. I thought while listening that I saw before me Daniel when he set his face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes". The spirit was the same - and the ~~words~~ expressions similar to those which characterise the prayer recorded in the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel, as having been presented by that prophet.

He abstains from all unnecessary luxuries - when offered on one occasion a little wine, he declined it stating his reasons in a short but eloquent reply to which I fear I cannot do justice in a translation "I know" said he "that wine maketh glad the heart of man, and how can I be ~~glad~~ joyful while the name of Jehovah is blasphemed? can I be joyful while the City of God is trampled under foot? can I be joyful while the people of God having turned their back upon the Lord are wallowing in sin - Who is not reminded by such a reply of the expressions of the captive Israelite "If I forget thee O Jerusalem let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee: let my tongue cleave unto the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy"?

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On another occasion when at a marriage feast he slipt away unperceived - On his being missed the company were thrown into great distress - and anxiously enquiring "where is the Rabbi? where is the Rabbi?" dispersed in search of him, but nowhere could he be found on returning from the search some one enquired Have you been to the synagogue? The suggestion was caught at - and the fathers of the youthful pair - who were men of affluence hastened to the synagogue - where they found him in the darkness of the night engaged in prayer. They entreated him to rejoin the party and bless the youthful couple with ~~their~~ his presence "No" said he "I cannot (You are joyful as is befitting the occasion - but my heart is sad - sad, sad when I think of the state of my people" - They urged him further when to meet their wishes he consented to rejoin the party on condition of all music being laid aside - a marriage party without music was a thing almost unknown amongst the Jews. but such was the attachment of his flock to this Rabbi - that the point was at once conceded - and on his rejoining the party, the most marked attention was given to several addresses which he delivered in the course of the evening - on the subject of the sins to which they and their nation are most addicted - And similar manifestations of religion are occasionally met with amongst the more humble of the Rabbis

— Amongst the more learned there are also many dissatisfied with Judaism. In the course of the past year I made the acquaintance of a Rabbi who was profoundly versed in the Talmud - but being dissatisfied with its instructions he had pushed further ~~to~~ [illegible] his investigations of divine truth. In the prosecution of these investigations he became acquainted with a distinguished professor in a German University - whose neological sentiments are such that he is called by his friends "pagan philosophy personified". He gradually imbibed the views of this professor - and in proportion as he did so he gave up his talmudical theories - but he still felt that he had not got hold of the truth * Whilst groping after the truth he met with a Priest of the Greek Church - who distinguishing carefully betwixt revealed truth - and human systems convinced him of the truth of Christianity - He had never before met with Evangelical Christians amongst Protestants - and removed shortly afterwards to Russia - that he might learn the way of truth more perfectly - and there I met with him, while he was studying the truth as it is in Jesus

I have written I fear at an undue length - and must therefore close - though much that is equally interesting concerning these sons of Abraham remains untold - and should what I have narrated lead to fervent prayer for their conversion I shall not have written in vain - But my dear brethren - more than prayers are required - prayer must be followed - or accompanied by efforts if we would see them converted to the Lord.

I have seen since the commencement of my present engagement a people as degraded and demoralised as any I have seen abroad - but I would still point to the high places of the field and entreat all who can to hasten to the help of the Heathen. There will always be many prevented by bodily constitution and other causes from leaving the land of their fathers & Scotland no one there need perish for lack of knowledge - while there an ascending bitter cry ascend from the dark places of the earth - will no one hasten to their aid? Do none care for their souls?

Per Roscius

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If they call upon the Lord they shall be saved. But how can they call on him in whom they do not believe? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? - Let us forget not our Saviour's injunction to pray that more labourers may be sent forth to instruct the ignorant - and to help those that are ready to perish.

I am my dear brethren
Yours in Christian love
John Croumbie Brown

Home Missionary Society's Rooms
London - 11 Chatham place
1 January 1841